

TRICHOMONIASIS



WHAT IS TRICHOMONIASIS (TRICH)?

Trichomoniasis (trich) is a highly contagious, sexually transmitted disease of cattle caused by the protozoan *Tritrichomonas fetus*, which is about the size of a sperm cell.

The disease is non-invasive and can be found in microscopic folds of the bull's penis and sheath; as a bull matures, these folds deepen and are more conducive for the organism to survive or multiply. It is sexually transmitted to the cow during breeding and can be found in the cow's vagina and uterus.

Trich was added to the Kansas reportable disease list in 2010. Positive cases must be reported to the Kansas Animal Health Commissioner.

HOW IS TRICH DETECTED & MANAGED?

Trich is physically unnoticeable in bulls; only testing can confirm the presence of the disease. Cows may experience pregnancy loss (generally 50-70 days of gestation), abortion within 5-7 months of gestation and/or infertility.

The primary herd sign is prolonged calving interval or high open rate at pregnancy checking time. Cows usually clear the infection on their own; however, immunity is short-lived, and cows are susceptible to reinfection the following season.

Bulls may be tested for the disease. After two weeks of sexual rest, a veterinarian will collect a sample from the bull's sheath, and send the sample to an approved laboratory for a one-time PCR test.

Bulls that test positive for Trich must be sold for slaughter only.

There is no legal treatment for males or females; culling infected bulls and open cows is the best management method for Trich-positive herds. Prevention is the best way to protect your herd.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT TRICH IN MY HERD?

Contact your herd veterinarian or a Kansas Animal Health state veterinarian.

KANSAS TRICH IMPORT REGULATIONS

BULLS moving into Kansas, or changing possession or ownership within Kansas must meet one of the following criteria:

- Non-virgin bulls or bulls >18 months of age:
 - Must be tested for trichomoniasis and certified negative within 60 days prior to change of possession or ownership
 - Be sold for slaughter only or for feeding for slaughter purposes.
- Virgin bulls <18 months of age or younger may change possession or ownership without a negative trich test if the owner signs a statement verifying the bulls have not been sexually exposed to breeding-aged females
- Virgin bulls 24 months of age or younger that are part of a herd management plan approved by the animal health commissioner shall not be required to be tested for trich and certified negative prior to changing possession or ownership
- Bulls imported or moved intrastate for exhibition (show or rodeo) are not required to have a negative trich test if they will not be sexually exposed to females while in Kansas

COWS AND HEIFERS moving into Kansas must meet one of the following criteria or move into an approved Kansas livestock market and then meet one of the following criteria:

- Move for slaughter or feeding purposes only with no bull exposure after entering Kansas
- Have calf at side with no bull exposure since calving
- Be at least 120 days pregnant
- If not 120 days pregnant, have been exposed to only known negative bulls
- Have 120 days of sexual isolation
- Known virgin heifers with no bull exposure since weaning
- Embryo transfer-associated movement with no bull exposure after entering Kansas
- Cows and heifers imported for exhibition (show, rodeo, etc.) are not required to meet the above criteria if they will not be sexually exposed to bulls while in Kansas

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information on Trich, importing animals to Kansas and to access additional Kansas resources visit, www.agriculture.ks.gov/trich or the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, www.ksvdl.org.

KANSAS TRICH

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Just how accurate is the PCR test?

A. It is 98% sensitive, when the sample is properly collected and handled.

Q. What is the producer's cost to get the test?

A. About \$50 – 70, depending on vet fees; plus yardage, if the bull is tested at a livestock market.

Q. Do we have a lot of Trich in Kansas?

A. Only 1.5-2% of bulls tested, tested positive. However, Kansas has not tested a lot of bulls, compared to the number of bulls we have in Kansas.

Q. Does premium nutrition or body condition prevent this disease?

A. No, it is a venereal disease.

Q. Can samples be pooled at the lab, if so how many samples per pool?

A. Yes, five samples may be pooled. This is cost effective in expected negative herds. This is not, however, cost effective in an infected herd. Individual samples are collected and sent to the lab as separate submissions, and then the pooling process occurs at the lab.

Q. How does I find out if a neighbor has a positive herd?

A. It is up to the positive herd owner to notify his/her neighbors.

Q. What stage of pregnancy will the cow abort?

A. Most cows experience fetal loss at 50-70 days of gestation or may abort at 5-7 months. Very few infected cows will carry the calf to term.

Q. Can I test my cows?

A. Yes, but the test is not very reliable. Multiple tests are required for dependability, thus it not cost effective. Assuming a cow is not re-infected by a positive bull, she will usually clear the infection on her own.

Q. Can Trich be in frozen semen?

A. Yes, it may survive the freezing and storage process.

Q. Can I vaccinate my cows?

A. Yes, but the vaccine only helps the infected cow clear the infection and maintain pregnancy. It does NOT prevent infection, and vaccinated cows are not protected from getting Trich the next breeding season. A vaccination program should be part of your herd management plan under the direction of your herd veterinarian.

Q. To which lab do we send the test?

A. Any accredited approved lab is acceptable. The Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (KSVDL) is the only approved lab in Kansas.

Q. If I buy a "virgin bull," my herd is safe, right?

A. If you can defend the bull's "virginity," you are right. If you can't absolutely prove virginity, then NO.

Q. If a producer tests their own bull(s) with no intention of selling it/them, and it is positive, does it have to be sold for slaughter?

A. All positive tested bulls, regardless of why they were tested, will be required to go to slaughter.

Q. If a bull tests positive and there are open cows in the same associated herd, could the cows be sold at the livestock market and go back to the country, or are they to be sold as "slaughter only?"

A. It is not required that these cows be sold to slaughter or that they be disclosed to be from a positive herd.

Q. How do I find out what other states' import regulations are before I send a bull there?

A. Contact the receiving state's animal health officials to determine their requirements or visit www.agriculture.ks.gov/trich for a link to other state's import pages.